

*Let's Read the Bible! Psalm 127*  
*[NIV 1984] No 7 in our occasional series*

A song of ascents. Of Solomon.

*Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain.  
Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.  
In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat —  
for He grants sleep to those He loves.*

*Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him.  
Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth.  
Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame  
when they contend with their enemies in the gate.*

**Psalms 120-134 are all headed, a song of ascent.** There's no widespread agreement as to what this phrase refers to, but it may well refer to psalms sung by pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, which is a city you ascend to.

**127 is said to be a psalm written by Solomon**, but, if it was, it's a shame he didn't base his actions on his wisdom [see Bible book 1 Kings chapters 9 and 11] but perhaps we can all be found guilty of that?

The psalm came to me this week and seemed appropriate for this diary because of what it says about the house the Lord builds and children.

The house the Lord builds refers to three things. [1] the domestic dwelling of the faithful Israelite; [2] the house or dynasty that God promised He would build for King David, which culminates in God's promises that He would establish a King whose throne will be forever. This is Jesus [Bible book 2 Samuel, chapter 7 verse 16] and [3] The Church. As Paul tells us [Bible book Ephesians chapter 2 verse 22]:

**In Christ we are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.**

Whatever the house the same message is given: **unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain.**

This tells us something about the Church we really need to get inside our heads:

God's Church cannot be built by human effort. We can work night and day, we can lose sleep over it, but all we'll be doing is toiling for food. That is we'll keep it going. But we won't keep it growing. And in the process we'll end up losing our sleep over it – fretting it away with worry. Sleep, rest without anxieties, is God's blessing to those who let the Lord build His house.

When we read the New Testament we can see a lot in it about building the Church. For example Galatians. In this Bible book, Paul writes to the Church with great upset, correction and sadness, for he asks "After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort." [C3 v3] The Church is a house that God builds by His Spirit – the Spirit being the Counsellor whom Jesus sends to guide us into all truth to the glory of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

In the Bible book Ephesians, Paul tells us how the Church is built up, which is by living a life worthy of the calling we have received, by Christ giving us specific people to lead, guide and help us, and by faith. [see Ephesians chapter 4 plus]

It is not that we don't do anything. It is rather that everything we do is Christ-centred with a faith expressed in love: "From [Christ] the whole body .... grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." [4:15-16]

God's building blocks are our love for Him and our faith in Him. It's in our faith-fuelled, God-love-living that Jesus generates the fruit of the Church. [see Jesus vine parable, in Bible book John, chapter 15]

In reading psalm 127 this week it struck me that God is saying something very simple and yet incredibly important to us:

- [1] This house that God is building is a heritage for our children.
- [2] The Sunday and brigade children are His gifts for our heritage [future].
- [3] They are meant to stand with us in worship and mission.
- [4] But if they are to do that we must lead them to Christ, inviting them to seek Him, trust Him, love Him, depend on Him in life, and to praise & worship Him.
- [5] Else-wise, after years of effort, we will look for the children we have laboured over, to stand with us in the day of our need, but they will not be there. Instead of being blessed, we will feel ashamed.

**What do you think? And what will you do, so the Lord builds the church?**

Praise the Lord for His entrusting us with this task, may He enable, equip and encourage us to walk in the way of Christ, in His name, amen.